

ZERO TO THREE RESOURCE LIST: RACE TO THE TOP - EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Successful State Systems

Barbara Gebhard, *Putting the Pieces Together for Infants and Toddlers: Comprehensive, Coordinated Systems*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2009, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief outlines the need for a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood system. It discusses the necessary components – high-quality, affordable early care and education, health and mental health, and family support services – that such a system needs as well as the infrastructure that supports them. The brief also offers policy recommendations for those working at the federal, state and local levels of government. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Early Care and Education Systems That Support Quality Care for Babies and Toddlers: Key Elements*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2004, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This paper presents an overview of key early care and education system elements and their characteristics that reflect how such a system can offer quality child care to infants, toddlers and their families. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Barbara Gebhard, *Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Checklist for States*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2009, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This self-assessment provides questions to spark discussion about the needs of infants, toddlers, and their families and to lay the foundation for building an effective state early childhood development system. The checklist is based on research about effective practices in states, and is organized around the key areas known to impact healthy development for infants and toddlers: good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Julie Cohen, Barbara Gebhard, Ann Kirwan and Brandy Jones Lawrence, *Inspiring Innovation: Creative State Financing Structures for Infant-Toddler Services*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center and Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2009, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This joint paper highlights the work of four states—Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma—that have developed innovative financing structures to support services for at-risk infants and toddlers. It reveals key policy elements that cut across all four states, as well as strategic decisions and recommendations critical to the establishment of financing structures that support high-quality programs for infants and toddlers. Download a copy [here](#).

Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Barbara Gebhard, *Putting Standards into Practice: States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2010, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This paper draws upon interviews with representatives of eight states on implementation and alignment of their Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) for infants and toddlers. The paper summarizes the status of guidelines in states and offers suggestions related to training on the ELG and embedding them into professional development and quality improvement systems. It provides examples on aligning the ELG for I/T both vertically, with guidelines for older children, and horizontally, within the infant-toddler system. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Fact Sheet*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet is designed to document the ways states and territories represent infants and toddlers in Early Learning Guidelines (ELG). ELG or standards describe expectations about what children should

know and do across multiple domains of learning during specific age ranges. Currently, 37 states, 3 territories and the District of Columbia implement ELG that describe outcomes for infants and toddlers. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Jaelyn Kupcha-Szrom, *A Window to the World: Early Language and Literacy Development*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2011, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief on early language and literacy articulates recommendations and outlines research on the important role parents and early childhood professionals play in the brain development that occurs during the first three years of life, which includes fostering a child's early language and literacy skills. Literacy is part of a process that begins at birth as babies learn to communicate and begin to acquire language. When this development is not nurtured, children begin to fall behind and a gap in language and literacy emerges. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Lisa Schreiber, *Key Components of a Successful Early Childhood Home Visitation System: A Self-Assessment Tool for States*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2010, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This tool helps states define the home visiting system, assess the home visiting system's capacity, and prioritize areas for improvement. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that home visitation can be an effective method of delivering family support and child development services. As opportunities to grow home visiting programs come up, such as the new federal home visiting program, collaborative home visiting state systems provide the infrastructure to support high quality assessment, programming and model fidelity. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Julie Cohen and Erica Lurie-Hurvitz, *Seizing the Potential: Quality Infant-Toddler Child Care*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2009, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief on quality infant-toddler child care offers recommendations and outlines research demonstrating the importance of high quality relationships between child care providers and the young children for whom they care. Quality child care promotes children's cognitive, language, and social and emotional development and contributes to later school success. The strongest effects of quality child care are found with at-risk children. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Elizabeth DiLauro, *Learning, Thriving, and Ready to Succeed – Infants and Toddlers in Early Head Start*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2010, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief provides recommendations for improving the quality and reach of the federal Early Head Start program. In an effort to ensure that all young children have the same opportunities to succeed in school and life, the program was created to help minimize the disparities caused by poverty through supporting the healthy development of low-income infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in the context of their families and communities. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

Lynn Jones, *Making Hope a Reality – Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2009, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief on early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities provides background on Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and how these services can promote the best developmental outcomes for children. For children at significant risk, coordinated and carefully designed early intervention services and family supports can serve as a protective buffer against the multiple adverse influences that may hinder their developmental progress. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

High-Quality, Accountable Programs

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): Inclusion of Infant/Toddler Quality Indicators*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet highlights Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), which define standards for incremental levels of quality across a range of categories, and establish systems for rating and improving quality child care for all children. The National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative reviewed 24 QRIS

to identify states that explicitly include infant/toddler (I/T) quality indicators. The fact sheet provides examples of QRIS that include specific I/T indicators to promote discussions as states, territories and tribes begin to develop, revise, and implement QRIS for quality I/T care. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Designing Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Inclusive of Infants and Toddlers*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2009, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This paper offers suggestions for the inclusion of quality indicators for infants and toddlers within Quality Rating and Improvement Systems being implemented in states, tribes, and territories to establish a means to promote quality in child care settings. These rating systems typically include five common elements: standards, accountability measures, program and practitioner outreach and support, financial incentives, and parent/consumer education. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): Inclusion of Infant/Toddler Quality Indicators*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2010, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This document summarizes state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) with infant/toddler quality indicators, and highlights where each of the state QRIS systems stand in terms of requirements for professional development, learning environment and curriculum, ratios and group sizes, family involvement, administrative policies, and program evaluation. It also provides examples of specific wording for infant/toddler criteria. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *State Child Care Licensing and Promoting Infant and Toddler Nutrition & Movement in Child Care*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet provides an overview of standards for promoting health in child care in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs* (CFOC), revised in 2010 by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. It provides key recommendations in CFOC, discusses available state licensing data (including the District of Columbia but not available for the territories), and highlights where more research is needed. Download a copy [here](#).

A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Barbara Gebhard, Susan Ochshorn and Lynn Jones, *Toward a Bright Future for our Youngest Children – Building a Strong Infant-Toddler Workforce*, ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, 2010, www.zerotothree.org/policy.

This policy brief provides an overview of research on the role early childhood professionals play in responding to the needs of infants and toddlers to ensure healthy children, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. Recommendations are provided on the importance of federal and state policymakers supporting cross-sector workforce initiatives and investing in comprehensive, integrated early childhood professional development systems to ensure that our youngest children and their families have the opportunity to reach their potential. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Keys to High-Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers: Core Knowledge and Competencies for Infants and Toddlers*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2010, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet focuses on the core knowledge and competencies (CKC), which define the content (*knowledge*) and skills (*competencies*) that adults working with young children need to support individualized learning experiences and development. As CKCs are components of a broader professional development system in most states and territories, this fact sheet describes common elements found in the CKCs of 36 States, including age ranges, core knowledge categories, competency levels, and special considerations for children with special needs and cultural diversity. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This collaborative document defines the core knowledge, competencies, and dispositions (CKC) for consultants working with early care and education programs and settings serving infants, toddlers, and their families. Improving the quality of I/T early care and education is the overarching outcome of this guide, as research supports child care consultation as an effective method to improve program quality and facilitate family involvement. The development of this guide was driven by the efforts to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers and their families in the New England states. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Infant/Toddler Credential Fact Sheet*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2010, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the infant/toddler credential (ITC), defined as any combination of requirements that, when considered together, translate to formal recognition of individuals who work with infants and toddlers in child care programs. The document describes the components and requirements of the ITC, which is offered in 21 states. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Credentials for the Infant/Toddler Child Care Workforce: A Technical Assistance Tool for Child Care and Development Fund Administrators*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2010, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This report provides a guide to states and territories planning to develop or implement a system for formally recognizing the specialized knowledge and skill sets needed by infant/toddler caregivers. There is an increased availability of infant/toddler coursework and training and recognition of professional achievements of infant/toddler caregivers through credentials, certificates, certification, or endorsements. This guide includes examples and insights from existing state programs. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Infant/Toddler Specialist Networks Fact Sheet*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This fact sheet provides background on Infant/Toddler Specialist Networks (ITSN), a promising strategy that states and territories have implemented to improve the quality of child care and support healthy development of infants and toddlers. I/T Specialists provide support to the I/T field through a variety of approaches, including mentoring, consultation, training, and technical assistance. The document includes a map showing which states have ITSN and describes each State's approach. Download an electronic copy [here](#).

National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, *Developing a Statewide Network of Infant and Toddler Specialists: Technical Assistance Manual for States and Territories*, National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, 2011, <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

This manual describes the process of developing and implementing an Infant Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN) using six state examples. Research on infant/toddler development, infants and toddlers in child care, the quality of infant/toddler care settings, and the infant/toddler workforce all provide impetus to states and territories to develop initiatives to improve the quality of infant/toddler child care. Investments to improve caregiver practices and increase the quality of each infant's and toddler's developmental experiences were greatly influenced by infant/toddler targeted funds through the Child Care and Development Fund. Download an electronic copy [here](#).